IMPERIUM

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CIVILISATION SPOTLIGHTS

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ABBASIDS

Today on the blog we are covering the Abbasid caliphate, which was founded by Al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib after the overthrow of the previous caliphate (the Umayyad caliphate) in 750 CE. It ended with the Mongol invasion in 1258. Our focus in *Imperium: Horizons* is mostly the 100 year period from the founding of the caliphate with the Abbasid Revolution through to the rule of Al-Ma'mun and the development of the Grand Library of Baghdad.

ABBASIDS
Exhaust: If , spend an action to aquire a with . If , spend an action to acquire a with .
ABBASIDS
GRAND LIBRARY OF BAGHDAD
Garrison up to 2 cards here. Solstice: you MAY draw a card. You MAY garrison a card here.
Development cost: x4, x2.
Baghdad must be in play
ABBASID REVOLUTION
Choose: take a to break through for a and free play it OR put a you have in play into your history to return any number of . Put this card into your history.

The Abbasids offer up a few good openings: one is to play the Abbasid Revolution, which gives you the choice of removing Unrest (you start with plenty) at the cost of losing a region, or taking Unrest to expand – a very thematic choice for a freshly born, yet rapidly expanding nation. As you expand, keep an eye out for regions with rivers, as you're a natural expert at Irrigation (a card you should be familiar with from the *Imperium: Legends* common deck). You'll want to quickly cycle through your nation deck to get your trade routes into play: Maritime Spice Route and Western Silk Road. With the Western Silk Road and the Great Mosque of Damascus, your Unrest problems should be solved, allowing you to keep acquiring cards – a path that your nation card's scoring already incentivises.

IRRIGATION
Exhaust: treat 1 as 3 for the rest of the turn.
MARITIME SPICE ROUTE
Commerce: choose: gain 2 for each of these icons you have at least 1 of in play: , , , and OR acquire a .
Profit (3): free play a card from your discard pile (ignoring /).
WESTERN SILK ROAD
Commerce: pay 2 to return a and gain 1 .
Profit (3): draw 2 cards, if able. You MAY free play one of them.
GREAT MOSQUE OF DAMASCUS
Solstice: choose: gain 1 per / you have in play OR return a from your discard pile.

One of the least complex trader decks in the game, a key part of playing this nation is when you flip your Merchants card to become a Merchant Empire. Once you become an Empire, represented by the founding of Baghdad as your accession card, your ability to acquire cards merely changes: although you cannot play your Barbarian Advance, you can acquire using your Merchant Empire or by Dredging the Tigris. You can also use your Turkish Mercenaries in a glorious rush to release the garrison from your Merchant Empire so that – uniquely amongst all nations in this game – you can use its ability to gain a second Fame card from it.

MERCHANT EMPIRE
Exhaust: choose: trade OR pay 3 to acquire a / OR if there is no card garrisoned here, pay 3 and garrison a from your hand here to take the top card.
BAGHDAD
Solstice: choose: draw a card OR gain 1 .
DREDGING THE TIGRIS
Exhaust: choose: recall a to acquire a / OR recall a to trade.
Development cost: x5
TURKISH MERCENARIES
Free play. Pay 1 to choose: gain 1 action and draw a card OR you MAY draw a card garrisoned under your Merchant Empire and put this card into your history.
Development cost: x4

In summary the Abbasids are a great nation to start your exploration into the Trade Routes expansion, but flexible enough with their fantastic rate of acquisition for you to try a multitude of strategies around the market cards that appear.

AKSUMITES

We are spotlighting the Aksumite Empire, centred in modern-day Ethiopia, at the peak of its power between the 3rd and 6th centuries CE. A prosperous trading civilisation sitting on the crossroads of trade routes from the East African coast to the interior of Africa, they require the Trade Routes expansion to play them in Horizons. Of all the trader nations, we consider the Aksumites the most straightforward to appreciate, and they are recommended for your first play to explore the expansion.

While this deck has the familiar utility cards (Conquer, Advance, Prosperity and Glory) it also has a trade route: the Maritime Spice Route. As this is your accession card, it will be a while before you can get it up and running, so in the meantime you can collect population and materials with your Salt Mines. Keep an eye on the market for cards with the Ocean icon, as they will boost your City of Adulis, a harbour city. Utilise Ge'ez Script to keep your deck trim, at least until you reach Empire.

You do not need to worry unduly about the unrest your acquisitions will bring, as your Stelae gives you a way to manage it and another way to thin your deck. Once you become an Empire, you have some choices: will you continue to acquire cards with your Exotic Trade, or will you first develop Aksumite Coinage to make conducting this trade easier (and yourself more flush with resources along the way). Maybe instead consider Conversion to Christianity, which gives you the dilemma of dealing with unrest or gaining extra actions, thematically representing the social upheaval the change of state religion brings.

How you approach the Aksumites will depend on the market cards and your opponent's strategies. You may wish to linger acquiring more cards or rush to become an Empire and the powerful developments you can access. Either way, do not overlook your Merchants card: you are at heart a trading nation after all.

THE ARTHURIANS

When playing this deck, the first thing to realise is that you never become an Empire. Instead, your development cards are replaced with Quest cards and you have an additional card, King Arthur's Court, that you place below your power card during setup. You use the solstice effect on the Court card to make one of your impending quest cards your active quest.

However, choosing an active quest is only the start. To successfully gain the quest you will need knights. In addition, there is a choice to make. Will you take the seductive swift approach and utilise Morigena, or the more patient approach of Myrddin Wilit?

If you decide to utilise Morigena then you will likely be garrisoning Myrddin Wilt, spreading unrest to all players, and accelerating through your nation deck. This strategy is fast but fraught with danger, as, unlike other civilisations in Imperium, you do not want to cycle through your nation deck too quickly. If you get through all your nation cards you will reach your nadir card, Gwaith Camlan (Battle of Camlann). This card comes into play immediately once you draw it and represents the final battle of King Arthur. At this point you are going to start collecting considerable unrest or be forced to put your valuable knights into your history pile, representing the losses you are taking in the battle.

You may decide to take the slower but safer path and use the wisdom of Myrddin Wylit, but he requires you garrison three knights (representing them searching the land) to claim the active quest. Whichever route you choose you can get access to your 'development cards' (the quests) even though you are a Barbarian State.

KING ARTHUR'S COURT
Passive: a ✦ card that is garrisoned here is considered the active quest.
Exhaust: if Camelot is in play, discard a card to return an .
Solstice: if there is no active quest, you MAY take to garrison an impending quest.
MORIGENA
All players take .
You MAY abandon a with garrisoned Myrddin Wyllt to put both the active quest and the top card of your nation deck in your discard pile.
MYRDDIN WYLLT (MERLIN)
Abandon 3 garrisoned in to draw the active quest into your hand.
GWAITH CAMLAN
PUT INTO PLAY WHEN GAINED.
Cannot be abandoned or recalled.
Solstice: put a into your history (garrisoned or from your hand) or take 2

Your knights are an important and unique part of your deck. Knights such as Bedwyr and Cai represent the great warriors from the Welsh stories. Most of your knights share a special ability. If you play them for their game effect you can garrison them in an already played region and trigger that region's effect again, even if that region already has a garrison. Of course, you can also garrison them from your hand, like any other card, when you play a region.

BEDWYR (SIR BEDEVIRE)
You MAY return *Excalibur* from your discard pile to the top of your deck. You MAY garrison in a to trigger that card's play effect.
CAI (SIR KAY)
You MAY return a from your discard pile to the top of your deck. You MAY garrison in a to trigger that card's play effect.
VIVIANE OF THE LAKE
Gain 1 .
Solstice: choose: recall a garrisoned here or draw a card.
YNYS AFALLACH (AVALON)
Return a from your discard pile to your hand. You MAY garrison a card.
Solstice: you MAY pay 1 to recall this card.

Before playing the Arthurians we recommend you look carefully through your deck to understand the differences from the other civilisation decks in Imperium. There are no unrest cards in your starting deck, nor in your nation deck, but to ensure there are enough unrest cards in the shared deck, you will add some extra at the start of the game.

You do not have the usual utility cards like Conquer, Prosperity, Advance, and Glory. Instead, the abilities of those cards are implemented a little differently. For example, if you want to gain Fame then you will first need to quest for Taliesin the Bard. Then you can play the bard to move one of your knights into your history pile to gain a Fame card. Of course, doing that reduces your available knights for questing, and also weakens you when Gwaith Camlan eventually comes into play.

If you want to acquire market cards then other cards will be needed. King Arthur can use your knights to acquire regions and tributaries. Queen Guennuvar can use King Arthur to acquire civilised and uncivilised cards, and she also allows you to play empire cards even though you are always a Barbarian State. Your final quest will be for the Graal and playing that will trigger the end of the game.

THE ATLANTEANS

To account for the fact that they are a people of legend from the mythical "Dawn of Time", the Atlanteans differ from all other civilisations in *Imperium* in two significant ways. First, they have no history pile, but instead have a sunken pile – their entire civilisation is at risk being flooded! While the sunken pile functions much like another civilisation's history pile, cards that the Atlantean player would place into their history are instead simply discarded. This means that powerful cards that can usually only be played once per game before being consigned to history, such as the Acclaimed fame card, can be used multiple times to great effect.

Secondly, the ancient Atlanteans start as an empire. This gives you a lot of control over your strategy, as you choose which cards you develop (and when), rather than having to rely on the random order of your nation deck. However, that means that every deck cycle, you will need to find the materials, population, and progress needed to develop the cards you want, or miss out on the opportunity to add these valuable cards to your deck.

The other important advantage of starting as an empire is you can use the powerful cultured cards that appear in the market from the very start of the game. Beware, however, that some nations get a bonus to their attacks on empires. This is especially true if you combine your *Legends* game with *Imperium: Classics*, where some of the more aggressive civilisations lay in wait, such as the Celts with their *Cattle Raid*, covered in an earlier blog post.

Before playing Atlantis, we recommend (even more than usual) that you look through your deck. You will notice sinking is a major aspect of these cards. You have three Flood cards, which serve as your main way of acquiring key cards from the market, but if you use them to sink too many of your starting regions, your Prosperity card won't be able produce the resources you need in the early game. Another way of gaining market cards is to sink your *Atlantean Fleet*, but you may find it more useful to use it to attack, and instead sink other cards to keep your deck optimised for rapid cycling.

The other utility card you are missing is Glory, which most civilisations rely on to earn fame. As the Atlanteans, you'll instead need to develop your Myths and Legends, which will let you earn fame at the cost of sinking a region in play. As you can see, between Floods and Myths and Legends, you'll definitely need more regions! Fortunately regions, such as *Themiscyra*, are available to develop should the market run dry of, well, dry land.

All your development cards are useful, so it's probably a good idea to have a priority list and work to have sufficient resources to develop them in the order you want. If you adopt this approach, a strong early option is *Vast Wealth*, as it provides a discount on your future developments – but only if you are sure you'll have enough to keep going for a "longer burn" rather than a quick splash before you disappear beneath the waves.

Atlantis' tools are incredibly powerful, but to soar above your opponents and claim victory, you'll need to look beyond your own developments to the rest of the world.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS
Sink a card in play to look at the top 2 cards of the deck. Take one of those cards. Gain 1 .
Development cost: x2
THEMISCYRA
Gain 1 . Exile a card from the market. You MAY garrison a card.
Development cost: x2
VAST WEALTH
Passive: reduce development costs by 2 (to a minimum of 0).
Exhaust: when you return an exhaust this card to gain 3 .
Development cost: x5
KLEITO
Choose: acquire / / / OR if *Palace of Poseidon* is in play, break through / / / twice. Sink this card.
Development cost: x2, x3

THE CARTHAGINIANS

In a game of *Imperium*, there are three resources to keep your eyes on: population, materials, and progress. Carthage is a trading nation, and as such, is all about the physical goods. Many nations in the game have their most famous daughters and sons represented as leaders. Carthage is no different, and you'll want to play its founder, Queen Dido early on to get your barbarian kingdom started with a new region. Your unique faction power and your Carthaginian Traders put materials onto cards in the market. Then once you get your caravans into play you can start directly buying up cards your traders have set eyes on giving you a higher degree of control over acquiring cards to support your strategy of amassing even more materials and territory. Then you can collect more materials and gain population from your played regions by using your prosperity card.

CARTHAGINIAN TRADERS
Free play. Add 1 to a card in the market. You MAY put a card from your hand or discard pile into your history.
DIDO, QUEEN OF CARTHAGE
Gain 1 . You MAY acquire and free play it immediately. Put this card into your history.
CARAVANS
Exhaust: pay 3 and discard a card to acquire a card in the market that has on it.

As an empire you choose which cards to develop so you have control over your strategic direction; you could continue trading using your Trading Ships and your Monopoly card to export unrest and other unwanted cards to your opponents. Alternatively you could take a more military route and use Hannibal and his formidable war elephants to further expand your empire and disrupt your opponents. Seeking fame is risky, as playing the Glory card requires you to abandon 3 regions, which is counter to your main strategy.

ELEPHANTS
Each other player abandons a . You MAY break through for . Put this card into your history.
Development cost: x3
TRADING SHIPS
Exhaust: you MAY recall a or a to acquire a card in the market that has on it.
Development cost: x4, x1
HANNIBAL
You MAY acquire . You MAY draw a card. You MAY draw a card from you history. Put this card into your history.
Development cost: x4
MONOPOLY
Gain 2 and draw a card. Give each other player a card from your hand or discard pile.
Development cost: x7

THE CELTS

To give the Celts a different feel from the other nations of Europe, we have incorporated some of their myths into their cards. This, along with their attack cards and nation power, tend to make their play style more aggressive, or at least more likely to generate unrest for their opponents. It makes them an especially great foe versus the Romans, who rely on an expansive tableau to support a lean deck wanting to play Glory often. Celts versus Romans – thematically appropriately, we might say – is one of the most "meant to be" two-player pairings in the *Classics* box.

One thing you will quickly notice when playing the Celts is the lack of a Prosperity card. This card is what many nations use to generate materials and population from regions in play. Instead, the Celts go on Cattle Raids to generate materials (and they are not averse to stealing materials from their opponents, especially if they are empire states), and utilise the mythical Cauldron of Cerridwen to convert progress into population at a more favourable rate than usual. A key utility card is your Druids which can generate population, progress, and manage unrest.

The aggressive side of the Celts is visible in their barbarian state leader – Boudicca. She'll gain you a progress (that you can convert to two population with the Cauldron) and slow down your opponents by forcing them to abandon (discard) a played region.

Market cards you are particularly looking for are useful uncultured cards, attack cards, and fertile regions.

CATTLE RAID
Gain 2 . Steal 1 from each player with at least one in play. Steal 1 from each player.
Exhaust: pay 1 to gain 2
Choose: gain 1
OR pay 1 to break through for
OR return as to gain 1
BOUDICCA
Gain 1 . Each other player abandons a . Put this card into your history.

When eventually you become an empire, your accession card Celtic Gold will generate ample materials, especially if you have managed to conquer an additional fertile region or two. Your aggressive style does not need to end during your empire state – you can develop chariots to keep conquering and cattle raiding. You will certainly want to develop your other leader Vercingetorix, both for his end game scoring of uncultured cards and for his useful ability to acquire any market card. The complication is that your nation deck is quite large – at seven cards it's one of the largest ones in the game, so if you don't hurry, the game might end before you even get to be an empire! This represents the thematic and historical fact that the Celtic tribes weren't prone to classic empire-building, and by the time they did mostly band together (against the Roman threat), all other Mediterranean civilisations have long been turned into an Empire or even to dust.

Each other player gains 1 .
Gain 4 per in your play area.
Passive: you may acquire exiled
Your Conquer and cards lose
the icon.
You MAY acquire / / /
Put this card into your history.

With this spotlight on the Celts it is worth shining a spotlight on unrest too. Unrest represents internal struggles your nation has to deal with: disorder, riots, famine, disease, and so forth. Rather than make these specific or have an event system, we have instead incorporated generic unrest into the game. Unrest is bad! It clogs up your hand and deck with useless cards and each unrest you have at the end of the game loses you two points.

Most nations start with some unrest in their deck to show how much internal stabilisation they need before becoming a durable nation. You might take unrest from opponents' attack cards, but the majority of unrest you will take is when you acquire market cards. This represents the upheaval and resistance cultures experience with change and new ideas. You can remove unrest by playing it as an action card and paying the cost (either 3 materials, discarding 2 cards, or 1 population). Alternatively, you can spend your entire turn and return all the unrest in your hand for free.This is called a revolution turn, and early game can be a very effective way of cleaning your deck.

There are many cards within the game designed to mitigate unrest – the Celts with their Druids, for example. But beware! If the central unrest pile empties, the world plunges into chaos and the game ends immediately. If that happens, the player with the fewest unrest cards wins, and no other scoring matters. To avoid this happening too easily, civilisations that tend to generate an excessive amount of unrest for others or themselves (like the Celts in this case) come with additional unrest cards to add to the supply when playing with them.

UNREST
Choose: pay 1 OR discard 2 cards
OR pay 3 . If you do, return this card
to the unrest pile.
UNREST
Setup: add to the unrest pile if the
Celts are in play.
Choose: Pay 1 OR discard 2 cards
OR pay 3 . If you do, return this card
to the unrest pile.
UNREST
Setup: add to the unrest pile if the Celts
are in play.
Choose: Pay 1 OR discard 2 cards
OR pay 3 . If you do, return this card
to the unrest pile.

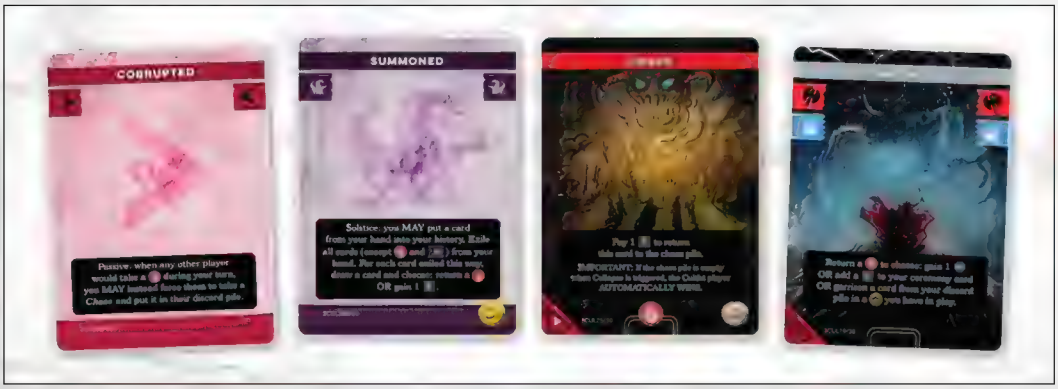
CULTISTS

Today on the blog we are featuring the Cultists who, like the Utopians (found in *Imperium: Legends*), are entirely fictional, and have some unique strategies for players to explore. The Cultists are a group of fanatics trying to summon an ancient elder god, with the obvious catastrophic outcome for humanity if they succeed. Thematically, they are inspired by common Lovecraftian lore, by tales of ancient secret societies, and by asking ourselves what the evil opposite of the Utopians would look like.

The first thing to notice with the Cultists is that (like the Utopians) they do not have a nation deck, nor an accession card, nor development cards. All they have is their deck of 17 starting cards, a power card and two double sided Ceremony cards. Before playing the Cultists, you should carefully look through all these cards, since we consider the Cultists the most complex civilisation to play alongside the Utopians.

The big difference to the Utopians (their Journey's evil reverse) is the Cultists' Ceremony cards. As you progress through the steps of summoning your elder being, your nation falls apart in ruin: your state card changes from Empire, to Barbarian, then to Corrupted, and finally – if you succeed – to Summoned. Look out for cards like Summon Aid that can help with advancing the Ceremony.

You have a unique victory condition, to match your unique deck of Unrest cards: the Chaos cards. Some of your abilities will sow these cards to your opponents, and if the game ends in Collapse while your Chaos deck is empty, you win! Your game will always centre on managing Unrest: get too many and your deck will bloat and slow you down, get too few, and your opponents can brush the threat of your Chaos victory aside as the game will stay too far from Collapse.



Your starting deck is your toolbox of utility cards that you need to supplement with market cards. Most of them are situationally powerful but with serious drawbacks, or are only playable at certain points in your progress to complete the Ceremony.

For example you can acquire cards using Frozen Waste and Strange Signs, but only from exile! Exiling is a major aspect of your play and you have cards beyond regions to enable that, such as Cloak and Dagger. Your Cursed Library can remove resources from the market to facilitate unexpected exile opportunities. When playing against the Cultists you need to be careful which cards you exile as the Cultists gain cards from exile quite easily.

Remember, you are on a dark path to either complete your Ceremony or bring Chaos and collapse. Many of your most powerful tools are enabled once you reach your Corrupted state, so definitely have a plan on getting there. But whether you'll be able to complete your unspeakable collection of cards and complete the ceremony, or you're content just to watch the world burn, you will face a puzzle like no other and we leave you to explore the strategies for yourself, assuming you are brave or reckless enough.

THE EGYPTIANS

Egypt is dominated by the Nile and this mighty river features in the Egypt deck – both as two region cards (Nile Valley and Lower Nile) and a vital card Flood of the Nile. While you're a young nation, the flood will bring you resources in a recurring fashion, as long as you control enough of the rivers of your land. Once you grow to be an Empire, the flood will allow you reprieve from the day-to-day labours, allowing you to acquire civilized cards

Becoming an Empire is represented with your ascension card Unification which is the political joining of upper and lower Egypt under the first king of the First Dynasty, Menes.

We are representing Egypt's longevity as an Empire by the large number of development cards you get as Egypt. This also means you are likely to be looking inward and developing rather than acquiring a multitude of cards from the market. However, you should not ignore the market entirely, key cards especially water icons will help your strategy. Becoming an empire so early will leave you with some unplayable barbarian cards – you can utilise your Egyptian Hieroglyphics to move those unplayable cards into your history. Once an Empire you could develop Embalming for more opportunities to put cards into your history.

Egypt's power card is interesting, you get a powerful effect using either the A or B side – we recommend new players use the B side of the power card and doing so with Egypt will give you a larger hand size which is a significant advantage. The A side of the card is more complicated, you can gain an extra action at great cost. Once an empire your A side power will also allow you to accelerate your development but great upheavals always demand more management from you.

You may think inviting unrest for these bonuses is a disaster – but Egypt has some of the best cards in the game for managing unrest, the Obelisk and the Pyramids.

PYRAMIDS
Passive: reduce the cost in or cards to play an card by 1 (to a minimum of 1).
Exhaust: draw a card.
OBELISK
Exhaust: free play an
Solstice: discard a card. Gain 1
EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS
Solstice: you MAY put a card from your hand or discard pile into your history.
Passive: anytime you pay , you MAY put a card from your hand into your history.
Exhaust: draw a card.

THE GREEKS

We consider the Greeks the trickiest civilisation to play in the Classics box (difficulty rating 4 out of 5), and this is because of the large number of different strategies that are available when you play them.

The Greek power card gives you victory points for cards you possess at the end of the game (in play, in your deck, in your hand and in your History), but the Greeks are about more than just collecting cards. The A side of the Greek power card gives you the first challenging tool to wield, allowing you to spend 2 actions to break through for a civilised or uncivilised card. This is an indication of what the Greek deck excels at - acquiring cards in the market, building a dominant tableau, and utilising powerful action cards. As you can guess, buying any old card won't help you. You'll want cards you can either pin, or use as free actions, or that give you secondary ways to score.

The early Greek cards represent the start of the Greek dominance of the Mediterranean. The City of Sparta, Greek Mercenaries and Settlers can generate the resources you need, and help you acquire territory, though you can also use the usual Advance and Conquer cards. However, you do not start with a prosperity card. You have to wait to become an empire and develop Greek Prosperity to get access to that effect. In the meantime, you'll rely on your supply of Cities (Sparta, Athens, and later Corinth) to cycle through your deck. Of course, using your cities to draw cards denies you the other resources they could supply.

CITY OF SPARTA
Solstice: you MAY discard a card to choose: gain 1 OR gain 1 OR draw a card.
GREEK MERCENARIES
Gain 1 . Draw a card.
Steal 2 from each other player.
Each other player gains 1
Choose: pay 1 to acquire OR gain 1 OR return an
GREEK PROSPERITY
Choose: gain 1 per
OR gain 1 per
OR draw a card per in play.

The Olympic games is the Greek accession card, and you are likely to want to make significant use of this card to remove the cards you do not need from your deck and help you cycle through it efficiently.

Once you become an empire there are a number of different strategies you can follow, depending on what cards you have already acquired from the market. You can continue to gain cards by developing Science, which then allows you to keep using your Advance card, or you could try Philosophy instead. Alternatively, you could be more aggressive, using Greek Innovation to give you more flexibility over the cards you gain from the market, and disrupt your opponent's tableaus.

OLYMPIC GAMES
Draw 2 cards. Put a card from your hand into your history.
SCIENCE
Passive: increase your hand size by 1. Your *Advance* cards lose the icon.
PHILOSOPHY
Abandon a (not a) to break through for .
GREEK INNOVATION
Place 2 cards on top of your deck to acquire / / .
Each other player recalls a .

The key to success with the Greeks is recognising the crucial cards in the market, and utilising your more readily available means of acquiring them before your opponents can. Then, you need to establish a strategy that incorporates your new cards so that you can continue to draw cards, gain resources, and develop. To help boost the effect of your own cities, you will be on the lookout for more cities and Metropolis, or any card that will help your Cities be more efficient, like Urban Development. You also will want to acquire or exile the dreaded Onager, as you are particularly vulnerable to that attack card. If you are combining games and using the common deck from Legends then Masonry is a great card for you.

Your nemesis are the Persians. They have their mighty Battering Ram and they can easily take the tributaries they need from the market, somewhat nullifying your market advantage. You can recreate this ancient history match up in *Imperium: Classics* and we look forward to hearing how you fare!

METROPOLIS
Solstice: choose: gain 1 OR gain 1 OR draw a card.
CITY
Solstice: you MAY discard a card to choose: gain 1 OR gain 1 OR draw a card.
URBAN DEVELOPMENT
Gain 1 and 1 per / in your play area.
ONAGER
Each other player abandons a .
Gain 2 per abandoned .
You MAY acquire / .
MASONRY
Passive: you can free play and cards.

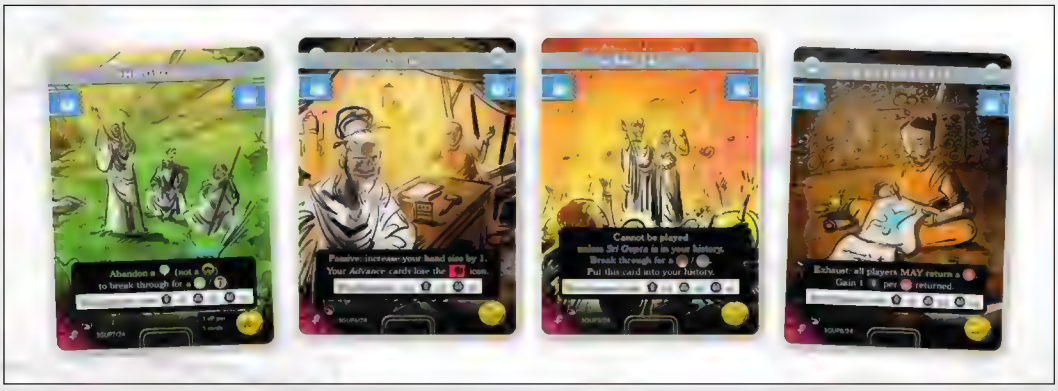
GUPTAS

This time we are featuring the Guptas, the Indian Civilisation flourished between 320 CE and 550 CE. Like the Abbasids discussed last time, the Guptas are another trader deck, meaning you will need to use the Trade Routes expansion to play them. The rules for clean-up are also changed when you play the Guptas, meaning you'll add Goods onto the market rather than Progress.

Although they do not have a Trade Route in their deck, the founder of the Gupta Empire (Siri Gupta) will get you started with one. The Gupta deck is unique in that it has two cards with the new Merchant icon – Shreni (guilds) and Sarthavaha (merchants) – as well as a way to capitalise on these: the Height of Civilisation serves as a one-time "epic Prosperity" card for them, and can reward you for having these merchants in play. If you look closely in the Horizons common deck, you'll find a few cards there that make the life of the merchants even more effective.

Once you have your steady flow of Goods sorted, you are going to want to flip your Merchants card to become a Merchant Empire to get access to the fame cards, as your Glory card is your accession card (just like it was for the Mauryans, a few centuries earlier, in *Imperium: Legends*), so it will be a while before you get into the fame cards otherwise.

Aside from the trading, you'll also have lots of opportunity to acquire Civilised and Uncivilised cards both while you are on your way to Empire and once you become an Empire. Just like the Greeks (in *Imperium: Classics*) you'll be able to develop Philosophy and Science to help with that. Another of your leaders, Chandragupta I, gives you access to another trade route. Finally, don't overlook the epic Mahabharata which will help with your Unrest management.


Abandon a (not a
to break through for a
Passive: Increase your hand size by 1.
Your Advance cards lose the icon.
Cannot be played
unless Sri Gupta is in your history.
Break through for a
Put this card into your history.
Exhaust: all players MAY return a
Gain 1 per returned.

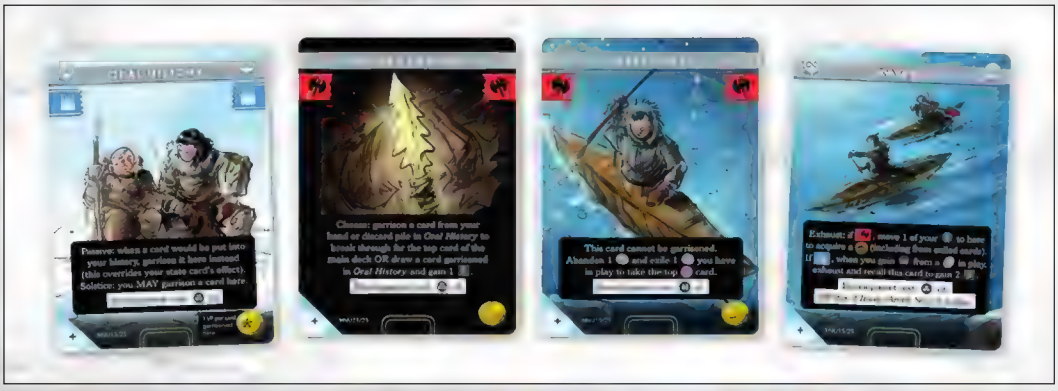
INUIT

Today on the blog we are spotlighting the Inuit. We wanted a deck with a unique feel to honour the special circumstances of their life adapted to the harsh conditions of the Arctic. Also, unlike the majority of other civilisations in *Imperium*, the Inuit still exist as a distinct culture rather than being lost to the annals of history, so it was important to us to do them justice.

The Inuit are the descendants of what anthropologists call the Thule people. They emerged from Western Alaska around 1000 CE. In *Imperium: Horizons*, we focus on the Inuit during this early period, as they spread across the northern lands of what is now Canada, and onto the ice of the Arctic Sea.

The Inuit have a unique State card, Winter (Barbarian) and Summer (Empire), which players flip at the end of each Solstice to represent the changing seasons. Players are thus restricted to playing or developing Empire/Barbarian cards on alternate turns. Unlike other civilisations (apart from the Atlanteans, found in *Imperium: Legends*), the Inuit have access to their developments from the start of the game, although playing these will of course be restricted depending on the State card. Furthermore at the end of Summer your hand size is decreased by two, meaning the Winter turns are more challenging with a reduced number of cards to play with.

You will definitely want to take a look at Qulliq (oil lamp) to be able to regain your flexibility during the cold Winter turns, and figure out how hunting on Siku (sea ice) can allow you to save an extra card between turns if you happened to draw one with the wrong symbol at the wrong time. Do not overlook the "Innovate" turn option when playing the Inuit, especially in Winter. After all, surviving and thriving in such an inhospitable environment requires considerable innovation.



Like the Vikings (found in *Imperium: Classics*), the Inuit have no history pile, relying on oral traditions as a record. This means usual one-use cards that would be put in history can be reused by the Inuit, at the cost of some Unrest. One possible strategy is to develop Oral History and Bone Carving to optimise your deck without needing a written history. Another popular approach is to develop Harpoons along with Kayaks and hunt for fame. Eagle-eyed readers will have spotted two new icons, Hunting Grounds and Ocean, both used across the new content of Horizons, but especially important for the Inuit deck.

JAPAN

Today on the blog we are featuring Japan, specifically covering from the Asuka Period (538 CE–710 CE) and Nara Period (710CE–794 CE), when Buddhism was introduced to Japan from Korea, to the rise of the Heian Period (794 CE–1185 CE), the peak of the classic Japanese Imperial court. Don't expect any samurai here, they don't come to the forefront until the following periods. Japan is an island somewhat poor in natural resources – the pressure of which you'll feel if you try to use their special power of gaining extra actions frequently.

Although not a complex deck, you will need to do some planning and timing to create the optimal smooth transition into Empire. An early decision to make is how to use the great reformer Prince Shotoku Taishi: you could get Tendai Buddhism and juggle playing that with your Clans and Shinto, letting the old and the new philosophies clash. Alternatively, if you gain an early pinned white card from the market, then you could start thinning your deck early with Kanji.

Once you become an Empire, you have choices for the order you undertake your developments too. If you want to concentrate on gaining more fame (while utilising both Shinto and Tendai Buddhism) you could build Jingu-Ji (Shrine Temple), which can be particularly effective when you use your Tea Ceremony to exhaust it twice a turn. Another direction is to focus more on the market with Shogun, and break through for white cards – surprisingly the Tea Ceremony is still an excellent addition to this strategy, it being a white card itself!

THE MACEDONIANS

Leaders feature in most of the civilisations in *Imperium*, but they are most important to Macedonia. The first leader is Phillip II who unified Macedonia, and his card gives you the flexibility to acquire any card from the market. Depending on the cards available, this can be a launch point for your entire strategy.

Your second leader is Alexander, who as your accession card marks you moving to becoming an empire. Playing Alexander allows you to break through for a tributary or a region and draw a card. As a hugely impactful historical character, he's the only person to be featured twice in a civilisation's deck! Once the first card is in your history, you can play Alexander the Great to acquire two regions, including cards that have been exiled from the market.

The final leader is Parmenion, who was Alexander's Strategos (military general and Alexander's second in command). The Parmenion card allows you to acquire a region or tributary and then immediately play it. As you see, all of these leaders are focused on flexibly expanding your empire, letting you collect high-scoring tributaries or the regions that are so useful for managing your deck and claiming Fame cards.

PHILIP II
Acquire
Put this card into your history.
ALEXANDER
Draw a card.
You MAY break through for
Put this card into your history.
Cannot be played unless Alexander is in your history.
Put this card into your history.
PARMENION
You MAY acquire and immediately free play it.
Put this card into your history.

The expansion of the Macedonian Empire would not have been possible without the Macedonian Army, which is represented by two cards: the Phalanx and the Companion Cavalry. You want to get the Phalanx into play early as it has a unique power, allowing you to play region cards directly from your discard pile – which works particularly well when combined with the Macedonian power card's A-side. The Companion Cavalry are an empire development, and they allow you to continue to play your Conquer cards (of which you have two copies) despite them having a barbarian icon, giving you another card that stays useful while hunting for high-scoring tributaries.

MACEDONIANS
Exhaust: play a from your discard pile (spending an action as normal).
Passive: your Conquer cards lose the icon.
Exhaust: when you play a exhaust this card to draw a card.
Development cost
Choose: pay 2 to acquire
OR pay 3 to break through
for

MAGYARS

Today on the blog we are looking at the Magyars. If you are new to *Imperium*, then we recommend you start with them as they are one of the least complex civilisations in *Imperium: Horizons*.

From early in the 9th Century CE, thundering across the plains of what is now Hungary came the rampaging Magyars. You start the game as nomads and will want to get some good hunting regions into play (featuring the new "hunting grounds" icon) to maximise your Hunters and Nomads card. Then you can disrupt your opponents as you play them.

Your early game will be kickstarted with your two leaders, Emese and her son Almos – which cards you use these two to acquire can set your strategy for the whole game.

The Magyars will stay in a Barbarian state for a while, with 9 nation cards to cycle through – representing the centuries during which they were the most feared raiders in all of Europe. You'll need to capitalise on this time to play your Glory card, as unlike other civilisations, this has a Barbarian icon so cannot be played after you flip your state to Empire. This happens once Conversion to Christianity is reached and added to your discard pile. Historically, around 1000 CE, once the Magyar tribes settled, converted to Christianity and the Kingdom of Hungary was created, the raids stopped.

Now your focus shifts a little and Unrest management becomes easier after you develop your Bishoprics card. You'll want both Conversion to Christianity and the founder of the Hungarian nation Saint Stephen in your history to be able to develop your big scoring card Holy Right. This holy relic is said to be the miraculously preserved hand of Saint Stephen and has been displayed in Hungary since Stephen was canonised in 1038CE.

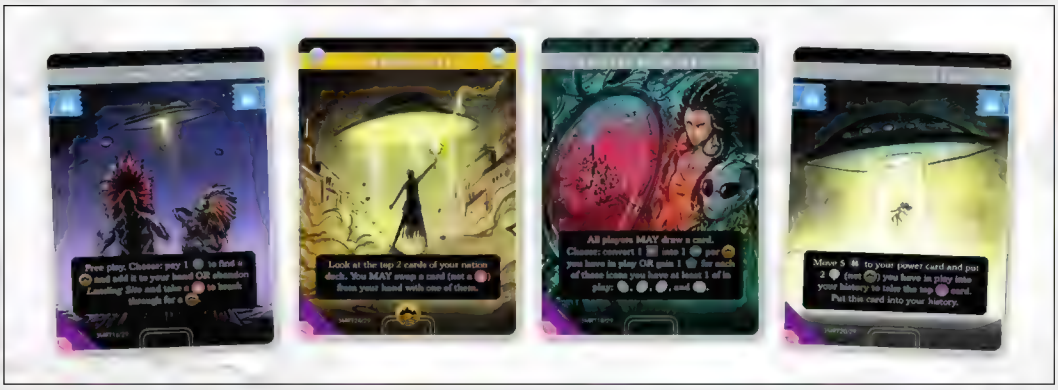
MARTIANS

This is our final spotlight for the civilisations in Horizons. We've saved the most unusual to last, this time it is the Martians, our second fictional nation (the other being the Cultists). Our inspiration for this deck's lore drew from many sources: ancient alien conspiracy theories, John Carter of Mars, and even Assassin's Creed. Before we go into some of the details we encourage you to look at the art closely, we've referenced other *Imperium* cards (and some ideas that didn't quite make it into *Imperium*), all with a Martian twist. Will you recognize every returning character from the previous decks?

Thematically, the Martians are alien visitors who have two conflicting goals – dominate the earth as an Alien state, or throw off their technological advances and 'Go Native' to mix with the human population. Things are complicated by their main power source, the reactor, which is the last card in the Martian nation deck. Like the Arthurians and their Gwaith Camlan, getting to this last card is bad, causing a Reactor Explosion. Your choice is therefore to flip your state card to the Barbarian 'Going Native' by removing all your Progress (you start with a lot), or remain an Alien and end the game before you get through your nation deck. The downside of not Going Native is you do not get a chance to develop your powerful Barbarian developments. Yes, the Martians are a civilisation that runs backwards, starting as an Empire and progressing (or regressing) to a Barbarian, at which point you can develop. These Barbarian developments are very powerful, such as the Permanent Settlement.

The strange alien nature of the Martians does not stop here though. You have some powerful extraterrestrial Gadgets such as Crystal Skull, Cloning Vats, and Fracture of Time. You need to remove these from your deck or suffer negative points. Using these powerful tools gains you Progress as a cost, the very thing you are trying desperately to remove. Juggling the use and removal of your Gadgets is one of the many challenges of this deck. Some you can exile, and there is always Sharing Our Secrets to swap a Gadget with a market card. If you do that then these near-magical objects will be very enticing for the earthlings to take for themselves (who will gladly suffer the cost of gaining a Progress).

Like with the other high complexity decks in *Imperium* we recommend players carefully look through the cards before playing – the usual utility cards are implemented very differently. For example there is no Conquer card to get regions, rather there is a Flying Drone and of course a Landing Site to make it more effective. If you want to gain Population, you will need to use your Ancient Astronauts rather than Prosperity. Martians do not really understand the human concept of Glory, instead accessing Fame cards with a Glorious Uplifting.


Look at the top 2 cards of your nation deck. You MAY swap a card (not a) from your hand with one of them.
All players MAY draw a card.
Move 5 to your power card and put 2 from you have in play into your history to take the top card. Put this card into your history.

We hope you have enjoyed these spotlight blogs and we hope you'll enjoy exploring *Imperium: Horizons* when it lands in February!

THE MAURYANS

Key cards in your early game are two important figures in Maurya history: the founding leader Chandragupta, who gets your Indian Elephant strategy started, and his teacher Chanakya. It was Chanakya who wrote the ancient political text Arthashastra, and in the game the Chanakya card fetches Arthashastra for you.

A typical Mauryan strategy is using these two leaders to accelerate your advancement to empire, using your Indian Elephants to disrupt your opponents and gain territory, and Arthashastra to utilise any unrest you suffer by discarding it in the solstice phase to gain progress. If you've been following this blog series, you will notice that the Indian Elephants' gameplay effect is almost identical to Carthage's Elephants (found in the *Classics* box), but unlike that one, it does not require you to be an Empire to use.

It is worth mentioning the solstice phase: this occurs after all players have taken a turn, and in it each player simultaneously resolves any solstice effects they have available. They are all non-interactive and put here to avoid slowing down any one player's turn. We mostly used this phase for upkeep and income style effects, but the Maurya deck is also well suited to deal with Unrest over time this way.

Acquire . Find an *Indian Elephants* and put it in your discard pile. Put this card into your history.
Choose: acquire and acquire OR find *Arthashastra* and put it in your discard pile. Put this card into your history.
ARTHASHASTRA
Solstice: discard any number of . For each card discarded, choose: draw a card OR gain 1 .
INDIAN ELEPHANTS
Each other player recalls a . You MAY break through for .

As an empire you have several strategies you could deploy to lead you to victory. You could develop mathematics, which allows you to continue to use your barbarian Advance card to acquire valuable culture cards from the market (a card they share with another ancient eastern empire, the Qin dynasty). You could continue your conquests with your Indian Elephants and develop the Grand Trunk Road; this region is unique in that it counts as two, making it easier for you to play Glory to gain Fame. As a reminder, Glory is a card found in most nations' decks that allows you to tear down your tableau of regions to gain high value Fame cards. This represents military conquest and further exploitation of the lands under your banner.

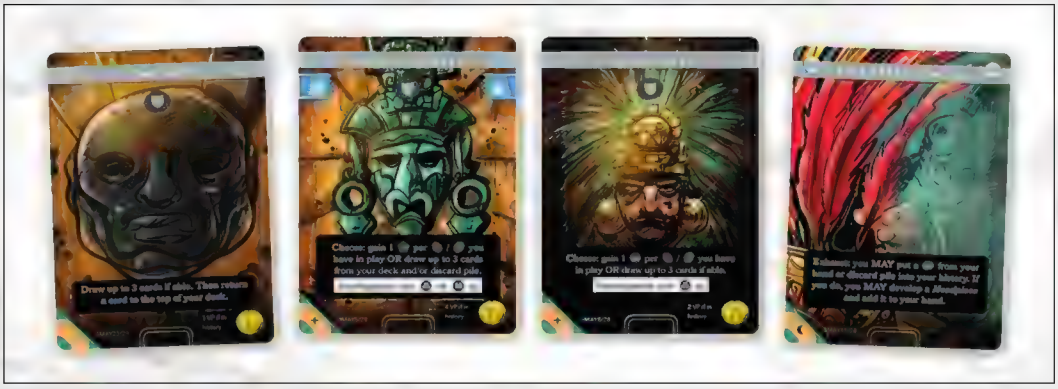
But as the enlightened commander of the Mauryans, you could instead become pacified and let your most famous emperor Ashoka lead you, who can gain Fame by putting your violent past behind you – along with all your attack cards into your History.

Passive: increase hand size by 1. Your *Advance* cards lose the icon.
Take the top card. Reveal your hand, draw deck, and discard pile and put all and the card into your history.
GRAND TRUNK ROAD
Passive: counts as two . Exhaust: all players gain 1 . you gain 1 .

MAYANS

Today on the blog we are featuring the Maya who, following the footsteps of the earlier Olmec Civilisation (found in *Imperium* Legends), were one of the ancient civilisations from Mesoamerica. Like the Olmecs, we consider the Mayans to be one of the more complicated civilisations to play in *Imperium*.

The Maya in *Imperium* covers the Classic Period (250 CE - 900 CE), and their deck features some unique mechanisms – many building on the concepts the Olmec deck introduced. Masks make another appearance, and along with the familiar Stone Masks seen in the Olmecs you'll find new developments: a Turquoise Mask and three Headpieces. These beautiful, handcrafted headpieces are special: you can develop them before you become an Empire – by of course constructing them with your Fine Featherwork card.



The Mayan deck does not have the usual utility cards (Prosperity, Conquer, and Advance) many decks feature. Instead, it has pin cards that will go into your tableau when played to replace them. You power these cards with Masks to get the missing effects: spend one of your actions, discard mask cards from your hand, and you gain the effect. This allows you greater flexibility: with more pinned utilities in play, you can decide which one to use your masks on. While the basic stone masks can be used, the other masks give more options.

For example, Road Networks are what you use for expanding your territory (acquiring regions), but if you discard a more elaborate mask, you could instead acquire a Tributary.

The Maya are famous for their cities, now magnificent archaeological ruins, and the Mayan deck features four of them – one as a metropolis. These cities are a little different from the usual cities in *Imperium* in that they allow you to retrieve masks from your discard pile. However, you will have to manage the water supply of these cities, using the Chultuns, a clever invention used to collect rainwater.

Finally, some of the elements utilising the Trader expansion are found in the Mayan deck – specifically references to Goods, a new resource. More about those in a later post.

THE MINOANS

While the Carthaginians focus heavily on materials and the Qin Dynasty focus on population (both covered in earlier blog posts), the Minoans focus on the third resource type: progress. Progress is an abstraction of cultural might, influence, and inventions; a measure of how "ahead of its time" a civilisation is and the impact it has on neighbours and civilisations that followed it. The Minoans are traders and architects, and their deck reflects this. They take their name from their mythical king Minos, who features as their accession card – the card that triggers your change of state to empire. When you play King Minos you can immediately develop, getting a head start on customising your nation further, and get one much-needed progress to assist you. This is because the majority of the Minoan developments require you to spend progress, along with the other resources of materials and population, but we are getting ahead of ourselves.

A key early game card is Pottery. Every solstice, you'll need to decide whether to spend two materials to place a progress on the card, or to abandon (discard) the card and claim all the progress placed there. Moreover, Pottery has a barbarian icon, meaning you can no longer play it once you become an empire – but it can still accumulate progress! How to secure the resources to power your Pottery, and when to claim the progress it's generated, are going to be important decisions to consider when playing the Minoans.

Knossos is another key card, that you will gain before becoming an empire. As a metropolis, this is a significant improvement over the standard cities that many nations possess; during the solstice phase you can use Knossos to gain some resources at no cost or draw a card. Drawing more cards increases the options you have and also means you can afford to hold cards for a turn or two waiting for the right conditions; such as collecting unrest to then return them all in one go by taking a revolt turn.

Once an empire, the Minoans have seven developments for you to consider when designing your strategy for victory. You are probably going to want to prioritise gaining Architecture, as this card then gives you a one progress discount on other developments. After that you could develop Frescos to generate more progress, or follow the legend and build the Labyrinth. However, if you do that you will want a steady supply of population to send into it; the Minotaur is demanding, after all!

If you have managed to acquire additional cities, you could utilise your Minoan Traders as another source of progress. Whichever route you pick you should always keep an eye on the market and acquire a card that others have loaded with those valuable progress tokens, even if it ends up garrisoned or moved, forgotten, into your History unused.

THE OLMECS

We generally recommend players look through the cards of a civilisation before playing, and this is vital to understand and play the Olmecs with any degree of success – they are very different from the other civilisations featured in the game. This is deliberate; we wanted the Olmecs to feel totally distinct to reinforce their uniqueness.

The first thing to note is the Olmec power card gives no end-game victory points – apart from the Utopians (another complex and unique deck), all the other civilisations give victory points for at least one side of their power card, and players can use these victory points as a suggested direction when playing that nation.

Secondly, you will notice the large number of Stone Mask cards. Understanding how these cards are used and their interactions with the other Olmec cards is the key to success playing this civilisation. You might think, given their card effect, that the main use of the Stone Masks are to search your draw deck for cards and then to put them into your history to score end game points. While that is true to some extent, you should be using the masks for far more than that!

The Olmec deck does not have the usual utility cards (Prosperity, Conquer, and Advance) most decks feature. Instead it has Ball Games, Loadestone Compass, and Calendar as pin cards that will go into your tableau when played. You power these cards with Stone Masks to get the same effect as the missing utility cards would provide in another deck. These pin cards all work in the same way; spend one of your actions, discard mask cards from your hand, and gain the effect. This allows you greater flexibility: with more pinned utilities in play, you can decide which one to use your stone masks on. At the same time, it provides greater challenges: when is it worth "wasting" an action playing the utility? What do you do if you've expanded your deck and you're not able to reliable draw your masks? When should you start putting the masks into your history?

BALL GAME
Exhaust: discard 2 and spend an action to acquire
LOADSTONE COMPASS
Exhaust: discard 2 and spend an action to acquire
CALENDAR

The Olmec deck also does not have a Glory card, so gaining fame as the Olmecs is quite a challenge. You'll need to use your Ritual Sacrifice, but as that is a development card, you first need to become an empire. On top of that, you also need to develop Step Pyramids and get that card into play. While your opponents will try to exploit this weakness, take heart that you have access to much more stable and flexible tableau, once you've build it.

We rate the Olmecs as one of the more challenging civilisations to play (difficulty rating 4 out of 5) and you are likely to need a few plays to explore the different strategies you can follow as the Olmecs and to master them and maximise efficient mask use. You have a number of cards that can be used in different ways or in combination with other cards. As an example, Olmec Hieroglyphics allows you to get an additional use out of an exhaust ability or return a card from your discard pile to use it again. Another example is the accession card San Lorenzo Tenochtitlan, this is a unique metropolis for the Olmecs which you can slow down your deck cycling to retrieve a mask or gain some resources.

Once you master tableau building, hand management, and how to efficiently use your masks, you'll find the Olmecs a gratifying civilisation to play.

THE PERSIANS

The Persians formed such a vast empire by giving the various regions some autonomy using the satrapy system. In the game this is represented by tributaries, and Persia has more of these cards in their deck than any other nation; the Lydians, the Median Empire and the Babylonians. However, to do well as the Persians you are going to want to acquire more and starting with two conquer cards will aid you – if you can generate the population to use them.

Within the Persian development cards are several strategies you could pursue. If your opponents have acquired cities (or you are facing the Greeks) then you might want to develop your mighty battering ram, which allows you to continue to breakthrough for tributaries and forces your opponents to abandon (discard) a city each time you play it. Alternatively, you may decide to take advantage of your Satrap card and gain an action, but this card needs a steady supply of materials which you could ensure with your Windmills. The cultural influence of Persia is represented by the Persian Gold card, this card gives everyone, including you, materials, but also causes unrest for your opponents.

Each other player abandons a
You MAY break through for
Free play. Pay 3 to gain 1 action.
WINDMILLS
Free play. Exhaust: treat 1 as 3
for the rest of the turn.
All players gain 2 . You gain 1
Each other player takes

As the Persians you will be especially on the lookout for cards in the market with scoring multipliers. As you can amass a big stack of materials, tributaries, and sometimes regions, these will be of prime interest to you, but in the mid-game turning to playing Glory and amassing Fame is another option to score high - especially if you're playing against someone like Rome who also seeks to gain fame.

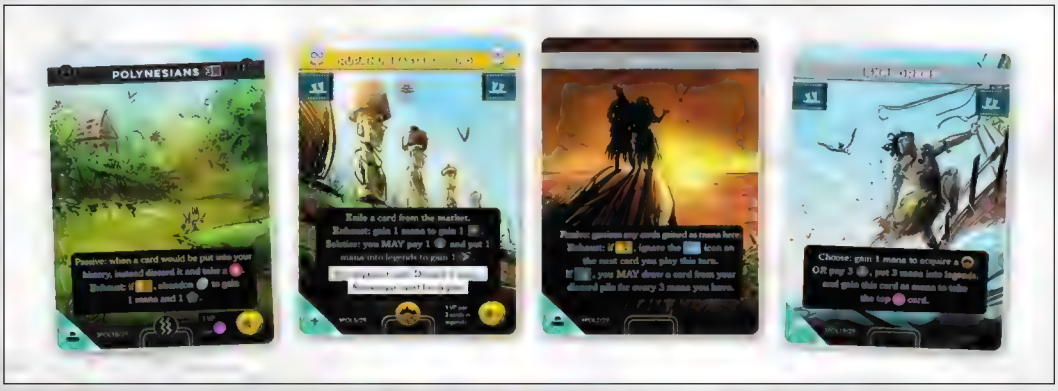
POLYNESIANS

Today on the Blog we are spotlighting the Polynesians, who present the players with a rather different approach to playing the game, as is fitting for the rather different path their historical story tells us. They also provided us with a unique design challenge too: like the Inuit, they exist as a living culture today, rather than just on the pages of history books.

Polynesians trace their prehistoric origins to Oceanic Southeast Asia, and they migrated from there to the Samoan islands between 1500-900 BCE. But there is only so much food one can grow on an island, and by 500 CE they needed to expand outwards across the whole of the Polynesian Triangle, eventually reaching Aotearoa (New Zealand) around 1280 CE.

We generally recommend players look through the cards of a civilisation before playing, and this is vital to play the Polynesians with any degree of success – their challenges are very different from the other civilisations featured in the game. This is deliberate; the Polynesians faced an epic task of navigating and expanding across a wide ocean containing over 1000 islands. Most contemporary cultures never voyaged beyond the sight of land.

The first thing to notice is the Polynesians have a unique State card which represents the phases they went through in their expansion. Island Bound is where they locate and settle new islands, and Voyaging is when they are searching for new land. This State card is flipped back and forth by playing specific cards such as Waka Hourua (Large Canoes). Timing this flip is tricky: all of the Inuit development cards are regions to be discovered, which you can only do while Voyaging, but staying at sea too long can leave you in real danger of running out of cards, as you can only draw cards from your deck while Island Bound.



You'll note the development cost of Rapa Nui is mana. This is another feature of the Polynesian deck. Polynesian mythology has the concept of mana; the possession of the energy or power that permeates the universe, giving its owner great authority. We represent this with the Mana card that starts in play next to your power card, and forces you to temporarily remove cards from your deck to be used as mana. Somewhat similarly to the Atlanteans (found in *Imperium: Legends*) the Polynesians have no history pile (since they did not rely much on written history). They instead have a Legends pile, meaning that usual one-use cards that would be put into history can be reused. Gaining Fame cards is also linked to Mana and the Legends pile, using the Explorers card.

THE QIN DYNASTY

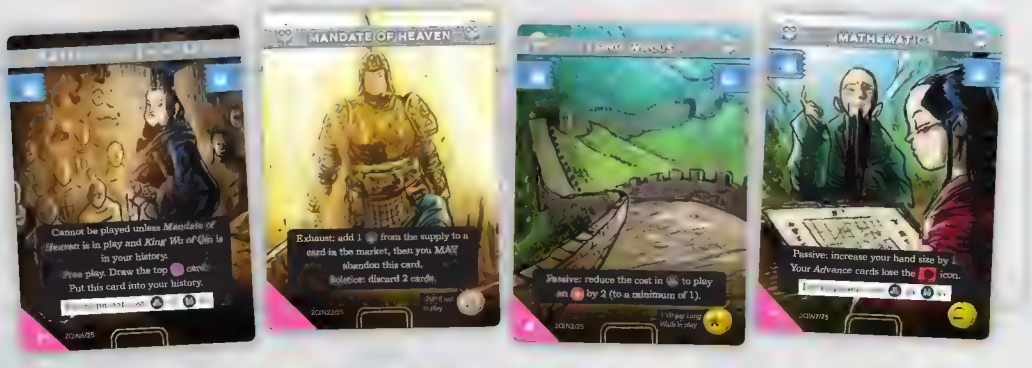
The Carthaginians focused heavily on materials, and their power placed materials in the market instead of progress. The Qin do the same for population, as they attempt to take control of the populous smaller nations located in the area that is now north-east China. Your unique faction power puts population onto market cards and your Confucianism card can then acquire them, but your deck has other uses for population too.

With the Qin you continually face challenging decisions that pull you in two directions. The two competing philosophies of Legalism and Confucianism are part of your deck, and playing one prevents the play of the other – do you follow the school of Legalism and expand your empire with territory? Or do you instead adhere to the school of Confucianism for other benefits? Or do you try to juggle both? Or perhaps you'll concentrate on the School of Diplomacy instead to quickly expand your reach?

QIN
Passive: when you would place on a card in the market, instead place 1
Exhaust: if you gain a card from the market with on it, double the gained.
Abandon Confucianism.
Exhaust: pay 3 to acquire
Abandon Legalism.
Exhaust: spend an action and discard 2 cards to choose: acquire / / with on it OR return up to 2 from your discard pile.
Abandon up to 3 . For each abandoned, you MAY acquire /
If , all other players recall a

The decisions do not stop with philosophy. You have a duke (Zhuang of Qin) a king (Wu of Qin) and the first emperor (Qin Shi Huang). All of them require for the Mandate of Heaven to be in play and that the earlier leaders to have been played. However, Mandate of Heaven has a heavy cost to remain in play, so you may need to discard it and then manage your hand to ensure you can play it before you want to play the next leader. This symbolises the constant struggle early Chinese leaders had to go through, to prove themselves worthy of being the one attempting to unify an empire so vast and so diverse.

These hard choices continue when you become an empire – which strategy do you follow to victory? Developing your Long Walls for protection that get stronger the more of them you have in play, or Mathematics to continue your technological advances? Or some of the other development cards you have available? As you explore the Qin in *Imperium: Legends*, what strategy will you follow?


Cannot be played unless Mandate of Heaven is in play and King Wu of Qin is in your history.
Free play. Draw the top card.
Put this card into your history.
MANDATE OF HEAVEN
Exhaust: add 1 from the supply to a card in the market, then you MAY abandon this card.
Solstice: discard 2 cards.
Passive: reduce the cost in to play an by 2 (to a minimum of 1).
MATHEMATICS
Passive: increase your hand size by 1.
Your Advance cards lose the icon.

THE ROMANS

Looking at the Roman power card you can see the two main strategies for Rome: gaining population or gaining fame cards. More on the latter at the end of this blog post.

In the early game you will want to acquire and place regions to build up your nation and make your two prosperity cards as effective as possible. Roman Expansion helps greatly, and you will want to play this before the region common cards are all taken to guarantee you get two regions, even if your opponents have not played regions themselves yet. You can garrison your regions with any cards you do not immediately need (such as cultured cards) as you know you will be seeing them later when you play Glory and abandon them with their associated region. You also want to get the City of Rome into play to give you either a steady income or a way to cycle cards. While your city building proficiency is not quite on a par with the legendary city states of Greece, having Rome in play followed by a city or two acquired from the market can lead to a nice population income or deck speed increase – both of which are essential to scoring as well as the Romans.

ROMANS
Passive: whenever you look at any number of cards from the deck, look at one additional card, then gain 1.
ROMAN EXPANSION
Acquire: You MAY acquire a region. Each other player reveals a . Put this card into your history.
CITY OF ROME
Solstice: you MAY discard a card to choose: gain 1 OR gain 3 OR draw a card.
This card cannot be garrisoned. Abandon 3 cards to look at the top 2 cards of the deck. Take one of those cards.

Julius Caesar is your accession card and when you take him you become an empire. Ideally you want to play Caesar when there is a tributary or region in the market, but drawing two cards can be useful too.

Once an empire, you have a number of choices: you could develop your Legions so you can continue to conquer more regions or you could be a bit more aggressive and develop Roman Invasion instead. Don't forget Rome the Eternal City though, as this upgrade to the older City of Rome card will boost your score and save you a card during the Solstice phase.

Free play. Choose: draw 2 cards, OR you MAY acquire . Put this card into your history.
LEGIONS
Passive: increase your hand size by 1. Your Conquer cards lose the icon.
You MAY acquire . Each other player abandons a .
ROME, THE ETERNAL CITY
Only playable if City of Rome is in play. Put City of Rome into your history. Solstice: choose: gain 1 OR gain 1 OR draw a card.

With this spotlight on the Romans it is worth shining a spotlight on fame too. The fame deck is a separate stack of cards that all players have access to. These are powerful cards and many are worth a significant number of victory points. However, getting them takes a bit of work and is not without some sacrifice. Most nations have a glory card, and when you play that you abandon (discard) 3 played regions to draw two fame cards and choose one of them. One side of the Roman power card lets you draw one more, giving you more choice. Abandoning 3 region cards hurts because you get those cards back into your deck and you will have to spend subsequent actions playing them again. Any cards you've stored underneath the regions as a garrison also return to your deck – but whether that's a good thing depends on whether they're cards you were saving for this moment, or unrest cards you had hidden away!

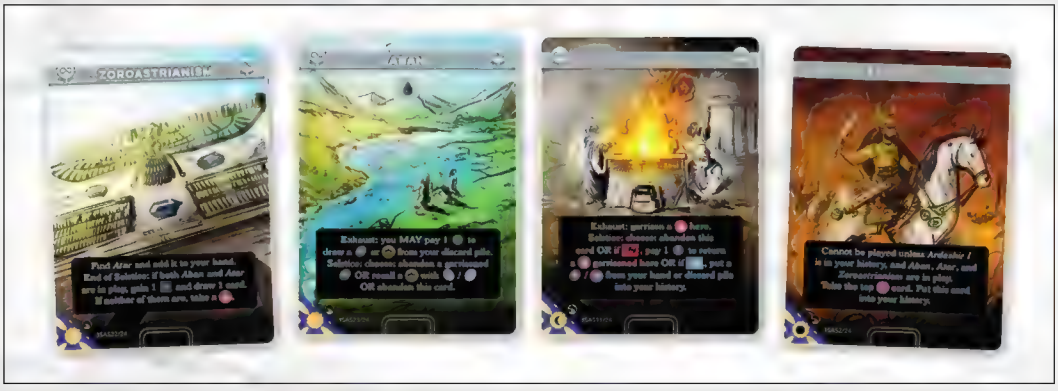
Once all the fame cards have been taken, then the next glory card played resolves the King of Kings card instead, which is flipped over to indicate the end of the game has been triggered. So before you take that last glory action, check you are ready for the game to end.

GREAT
Free play. Gain 1 action.
MAY put this card into your history.
Free play. Steal 1 from each other player. Anyone unable to pay takes
GLORIOUS
KING OF KINGS
When you would gain this card, instead resolve it. Then flip this card.
THIS TRIGGERS GAME END.

SASSANIDS

This time the spotlight is being shone on the Sassanids. This Iranian empire fought for four centuries (from 224 to 651 CE) against the Roman Empire (after 395 CE, the Byzantine Empire). They controlled a vital section of the Silk Road (represented by the Western Silk Road in their deck), and so the Trade Routes expansion is required to play.

Given the long conflict with the Roman/Byzantine Empire, it is appropriate that the Sassinds are the most aggressive (and most intricate) trader deck. You start with the founder of the Empire, Ardashir I, who you can use to fetch either of your knight cavalry, Aswaran or Clibanarii. Yes, we're bringing knights back in *Imperium* Horizons – their prior use was predominantly in the Arthurian deck.



As well as using knights and your trading merchants, this deck requires you to manage the requisites of Sassanid's state religion: Zoroastrianism. With cards representing water (Aban) and fire (Atar) in your deck, you will have to keep your rivers pure and have some unrest to burn if you want to keep the ceremonies going – and Khosrau I (your Accession card) demands that you do so.

Look at the top card. You MAY place it at the bottom of the deck. You MAY garrison a card.
Free Play. Choose: find a card and put it into your history to gain 1 action OR if the deck is empty, trigger King of Kings and put this card into history.
DREADED
Each other player abandons a / . You MAY break through for a / . You MAY put this card into your history to exile the top card of the deck (not King of Kings).

On top of all this, this deck gives you some unique ways to interact with the Fame cards. The region Huuzistan lets you scout the Fame deck, and if you use your knights as a garrison (re-triggering the region's effect), you can sift through the Fame deck to find what you need, then take it with your Clibanarii. On top of that, Khosrau I gains you the top Fame card, and Shah can get another. You also have your own Fame development – the appropriately named Dreaded – which can shorten the game if you are on a Fame rush strategy.

THE SCYTHIANS

When playing the Scythians, the first thing to note is that your nation is nomadic – this is represented with your Tents card, which gains you population when you play region cards, and your two Nomads cards, which gain you materials. These cards replace the usual Prosperity card most nations have. To represent the Scythian prowess in war, your Raiders card steal population from opposing empires and your Mounted Archers protect you from their attacks in return. This duality of raiding and defending is the defining feature of the Scythian deck. Unlike Celts, their attacks aren't focused on unrest, but instead on maintaining their fairly flexible resource needs from the pockets of their opponents.

NOMADS
All players MAY draw a card.
Free play. Draw 2 cards.
All other players recall a
Exhaust: when another player plays
another player's turn).

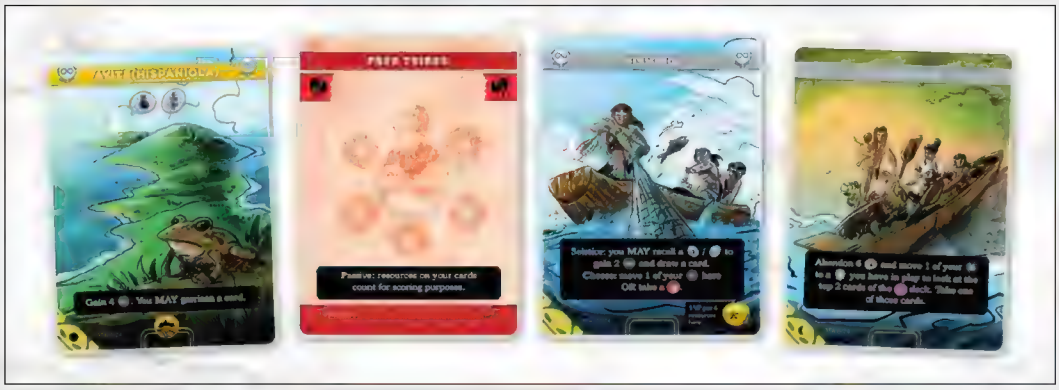
Another feature of the Scythians is card draw: you have a variety of ways to draw additional cards to adapt your play to the current situation. Chief among these is your Tamaga, which were the brand marks the Scythians used to identify possessions – a must for nomadic societies with livestock.

As you don't gain access to your Glory card until you become an empire, you won't be able to pursue Fame early in the game. This means that a strategy of expansion will lead to a wealth of materials, which will score you points through your power card, but consider investing in developing valuable jewellery. Developing Kurgans (burial mounds) will allow you to put cards into your history and boost your hand size will help your deck speed and further build on your choices each turn.

While we feel the Scythians are a fairly straightforward civilisation to play (difficulty rating 2 out of 5), their nomadic tendencies mean you need a slightly different approach than you might take with the more settled civilisations in *Imperium: Classics*.

TAINO

This time on the blog we are spotlighting the Taíno. Researchers believe the cultural ancestry of the Taíno comes from the Arawakan-speaking people living in large settled towns in South America, who migrated to the Caribbean by 250 BCE. To better tell their story of expanding their civilization's horizons across the previously sparsely-populated islands, we stepped away from our usual abstraction of "Empire building", instead having them focused on unlocking technologies and supporting their people as they live as free tribes. Even the card at the end of their nation deck – Ayiti (Hispaniola) – focuses on reaching a better land, instead of acceding to any imperial concept of development.



The Taíno are masterful in food production and have a special rule that any resources on their cards are counted for scoring purposes. This is reinforced by many of their cards, such as Fishing and Canoes. Production and fertile regions are the most useful for them, and you will want to concentrate on these to utilise the Taíno version of glory, Migration.

They still have developments, including their famous leader Enriquillo who can gain just the Fame card you need. They are also not shut out from white market cards: a helpful Gift Exchange will see you on your way, and their card Batey (Ball Games) means that the Taíno match the Greeks for their ease of acquisition. But among this card acquisition, do not lose focus on collecting those resources: you'll find them useful and any leftovers are useful for scoring with the Caribbean Sea.

TANG

Today on the blog we are looking at the Tang Dynasty of Imperial China. It ruled from 618 to 907 CE and oversaw expansion, cultural developments and economic growth with blossoming trade along the Silk Road. In Horizons, they are another trader nation and require the Trade Routes expansion to play. Like the other Chinese civilisation, the Qin Dynasty before them, playing the Tang means you put population onto market cards rather than progress.

Two things define the Tang deck more than anything else: cities and Unrest. The largest cities of the world at the time were in China, so naturally the deck comes with plenty of cities, including two metropolises and their bustling Cosmopolitan Culture. The second is the constant instability, represented by the threat of Rebellion even from your own cities and your unusual relation to Unrest. You do not have any in your deck, instead adding 3 copies to the supply, but every solstice you'll take an Unrest!

This is not entirely a drawback, as you can use Taoism to get an action once you have a civilised card. Fortunately, you have two in your starting deck – Imperial Examinations and Scholar Officials. These two cards also give you access to resources on cards in the market and a way to acquire more Civilised cards, with an added bonus that you can continue to use them once you become an Empire. Your unrest management is made far easier once you play Chan Buddhism.

Of course trading is a part of this deck too, with the Eastern Silk Road as a key development, along with the Salt Industry Commission, which (at a steep, but manageable cost) will allow you to benefit from multiple Trade Routes. If your dynasty has the Mandate of Heaven (a card familiar from the Qin deck), it even provides a Goods income! Finally, do not overlook the fun side of life in the Tang cities either, with Tea Drinking and Fireworks, both of which can help you to draw the right card at the right moment.

We have barely scratched the surface of what this deck contains and offers. Like the Qin before, when playing the Tang you will be pulled in multiple directions and the timing of what you do is vital for your success.

THE VIKINGS

In some ways the Vikings are the other side of the Atlantean coin (who we covered in the last blog). While the Atlanteans start as an empire, the Vikings *never* become an empire. Like the Atlanteans, however, they have no history pile – the Vikings were never a cohesive empire with a written legacy.

Not having a history pile means your one-use cards (such as leaders like *Rollo the Walker*) are exiled rather than put into history, but it does mean powerful Fame cards that usually are put into history, you instead discard (and reuse!). For example, the Fame card *Glorious* is one of the best ways you can accelerate your deck and become an unstoppable horde. If you want to remove cards from your deck, you'll need to garrison them in regions, or put them under your *Sagas* card – the verbal history of the Vikings.

Never becoming an empire means no you have no development cards, and no need to gather resources to pay for them. The downside to this is that when playing as the Vikings, you have to react to the cards you gain from the nation deck each cycle for the entire game, rather than be able to plan your deck development strategically.

There is some mitigation to this lack of control. Your power card provides the ability to look at the top card of your nation deck and either return it or put it on the bottom (above your zenith card) every time you take unrest. This scouting ability is repeated on other cards in the deck, such as *Iceland* and *Graenland*.

You MAY garrison a card.
Choose: gain 2 OR look at the top card of your nation deck, then you MAY shuffle the nation deck.
GRAENLAND
You MAY garrison a card.
Choose: gain 1 OR look at the top card of your nation deck, then you MAY shuffle the nation deck.
ROLLO THE WALKER
card. Exile this card.

There are strategies within the nation deck you may wish to search for – for example, the Viking expedition to *Vinland* (North America). To reach *Vinland* (by putting it into play), you first have to draw it from your nation deck, and also have drawn and played *Graenland* and *Longships*. That's a lot of cards to find in your nation deck, so you may find the Viking explorer *Erik the Red* helpful in this endeavour.

Jomsviking is your equivalent of the *conquer* card in other civilisations' decks. They were ferocious Viking mercenaries, so their card requires you pay both population and materials to use them. On top of that, unlike those other civilisations, you don't have the choice to break through for the card you're looking for, meaning that you're stuck accumulating unrest whenever you play it. The card instead doubles as an attack card, forcing your opponents to discard a card whenever you play it. Combined with your other starting attack card, *Althing*, the Vikings tend to adopt a fairly aggressive playstyle.

ERIK THE RED
Cannot be played unless both Longships and Greenland are in play.
Choose: return an OR you MAY garrison a card.
Exhaust: when you play an , exhaust this card to gain 2
Pay 1 and 2 to acquire /
Each other player discards a card.

When you draw your last card in your nation deck, *Harald Hardrada* (the Norse king who almost became king of England), you trigger the end of the game immediately. That means that unless you've managed to optimise your deck down to a few cards, you might never get to play him! By that point, you'll need to have acquired plenty of cards from the market, as without your personal pool of development cards, you don't have access to the steady stream of victory points other civilisations have. Counterbalancing that growth with your regions and cards such as Sagas will determine how effectively you can cycle through your deck.

Hopefully this spotlight has shown you that the Vikings are less straightforward to play than most of the civilisations in *Imperium: Classics*. In our estimations, only the Greeks are more complicated in that box, with the Vikings scoring a difficulty rating of 3 out of 5. But if you can get rolling, the world will hear your roar, and you your opponents will tremble before you.

ALTHING
HARALD HARDRADA
TAKING THIS CARD TRIGGERS THE GAME END.
Take the top card.
Steal 1 from each other player.
Choose: gain 1 OR return an
CITY OF DUSH LINN
Solstice: you MAY discard a card to
choose: gain 1 OR gain 1
OR draw a card.

THE UTOPIANS

We consider the Utopians to be the most difficult civilisation to play in *Imperium* (difficulty rating 5 out of 5). This is because the approach to success with this deck is unlike any of the other factions in the game. Furthermore, you need to adapt the deck and your market purchases based on the civilisations you are facing, which requires a good understanding of other factions in *Imperium*.

The first thing to notice with the Utopians is that they do not have a nation deck, nor an accession card, nor development cards. All they have is a deck of 13 starting cards, a power card and two double sided journey cards. You should carefully look through all these cards before playing the Utopians.

The Utopian power card has a negative effect on both sides. Every time your deck is empty you take an unrest. This means you do not want to add individual cards back to an empty draw deck. Rather, you really want to empty your deck as you are drawing cards, so you gain an unrest but have a full draw deck.. This means, unlike all the other civilisations (with the possible exception of the Arthurians), you do not want to hurry through your deck. Instead you should hold cards in your hand and set up a situation to use them for maximum effect. Furthermore, you should avoid thinning your deck too much, and only put cards into your history or as a garrison if you have no other choice, unless you are building a deck that can easily manage unrest.

Your power card gives you victory points for your population, and gathering population is definitely part of most Utopian strategies. The A side also gives you a boost to this with a solstice ability that helps your opponent's deal with unrest while gaining you population. This is already showing the "friendly" side of these enlightened monks. When playing against the Utopians, you don't mind getting their help as an opponent, but you have to be careful not to help them along their journey too much.

Alongside your power card you start with the first journey card, Visions of Shangri-La. You need to gain and spend sufficient progress (which thematically represents wisdom, inner peace, or literal progress along your journey) to flip this to the reverse side, named Path to Shangri-La, and then onto the Gates of Shangri-La, and finally Shangri-La itself. Reaching that final destination is a game end trigger.

Each journey card functions like an extra power card, providing you with options and solstice abilities. This changing journey card is another challenge for players to master.

VISIONS OF SHANGRI-LA
Exhaust: when you return an exhaust this card and spend an action to gain 1 .
Solstice: choose: pay all your (minimum 5) to flip this card OR discard a card, then draw a card.
2UTO2A/21
PATH TO SHANGRI-LA
Exhaust: abandon a to gain 1 and 1 .
Solstice: choose: pay all your (minimum 5) to replace this card with Gates of Shangri-La OR you MAY draw a from your discard pile.
2UTO2B/21
GATES OF SHANGRI-LA
When put into play, flip your state card to its side.
Exhaust: put a card into your history to gain 1 .
Solstice: choose: pay all (minimum 5) to flip this card OR draw a card.
2UTO3A/21
UTOPIANS
Passive: when your deck is empty, take
2UTO1B/21
1VP per

Another unique aspect to the Utopian deck is the 5 sacred scroll cards. It is unlikely you'll want to play these for their action, as drawing cards is not generally a priority for you. You actually need these scrolls to power your other cards..

Portals lets you acquire regions (by magically teleporting to them using your scrolls), but, as all things with the Utopians, it is not quite as simple as that. In the solstice phase you must recall (take back into your hand) a played region or abandon the Portals card itself! You might be happy to discard the portals for the population gain, or you might be happy to recall a region if it has a useful ability when you play it. Either way you have a difficult decisions to make in the solstice phase, as well as during your turn.

Another example is the Tree of Knowledge. You can use your scrolls in combination with this card to acquire civilised and uncivilised cards, but during the solstice phase you have to discard a card from your hand or abandon (discard) the tree of knowledge.

These pin cards are unusual because they are activated by your sacred scrolls. However, that is not the strangest aspect of these unique cards - using them is an exhaust ability rather than an action. This means when playing the Utopians you will often have more actions than things to do. You may be completely happy to just use those spare actions to remove all the Unrest that you've gained through the various earthly temptations that you must face during play.

An additional and related challenge to playing the Utopians is that you only have 3 Exhaust markers, rather than the usual 5. Were it not for this limitation, a lucky hand would allow you to choose how to spend more than double the actions other players have. Instead, you will discover playing the Utopians is a constant series of hard choices for using your exhaust abilities.

Abandoning the Tree of Knowledge, Portals, and cards like them is not as much of a drawback as it might seem, as you can always use your Meditation card to return one of them to the top of your deck.

SACRED SCROLL
Free play. All players MAY draw a card.
PORTALS
Exhaust: garrison a here to acquire .
Solstice: choose: recall a OR abandon this card and gain 1 .
TREE OF KNOWLEDGE
Exhaust: garrison a here to acquire / .
Solstice: choose: discard a card OR abandon this card and draw a card.
MEDITATION
Free play. Return a card from your discard pile to the top of your deck. All other players MAY draw a card.

The key to success with the Utopians is hand management and careful selection of the market cards you acquire – any that provide population or progress are very welcome, and some of the end game scoring cards can help boost your final score too. There is no point racing to Shangri-La if you do not gather sufficient points as you go, but equally you do not want to delay too long with collecting unnecessary trappings of power or Fame. Remember, rather than developing a civilisation, the Utopians are on a journey, and the path is just as important as the final destination.

You can journey with the Utopians in *Imperium Legends*. What route will you take?

WAGADOU

Today on the blog we are featuring our last Trader civilisation: the Wagadou Empire, located in modern day Mauritania and Mali. The origins of this ancient West African civilisation are unclear; it is mentioned in written records from 830 CE but certainly existed well before that date, probably from the third century, or even earlier.

Their civilisation rose up on the banks of the Niger River, spreading north. They became a major power in the region when the trans-Saharan trade routes allowed them to export gold to the Mediterranean and Arabia that they found in and around the river valley. So, appropriately for this mercantile approach, the rules for clean-up are changed when you play the Wagadou: just as for the Carthaginians from *Imperium: Classics*, you'll be adding Material to the market rather than Progress.

You'll want to get started trading immediately, first with the Trans-Saharan Trade Route, which intersects nicely with your end of turn placement of Material onto a market card. After that, if you are up for buying even more cards with your riches, you'll want to use your Gold Merchants too. The Berber Traders and the Salt Merchants will make trading and card acquisition even more profitable for you. Even your "prosperity card", Golden Prosperity encourages you to have Trade Routes and Merchants in play. You shouldn't find the Material costs for increasing your population too much of a problem.

Dinga Cissé is a great way to get another Trade Route, or maybe you'd rather pick up a city. The options are thematically appropriate: he was the legendary founder of the capital of the empire, Koumbi Saleh (which itself appears as your Accession card). Your access to Fame is a little different: you should keep an eye on the market for fertile and river Regions (since as the Sahara grows southwards over the centuries, you don't have a good access to these icons), and keep a stockpile of Goods to play your Pride. However, gaining Regions will take a little bit of effort, as you do not have a conquer card, so expect to place Material on Region cards with this in mind. Once you become an Empire, you may still wish to collect Material to maximise your Great Wealth, or you may be eyeing your power card's scoring condition.

This deck takes a fairly long time to get to its Accession card, so your developments are all expected to immediately help, build and score for your cities, or be totally Controlling the Trade, scoring for each trading opportunity. And, as your empire grows to the world stage, the foreign influence of Islam arrives with the Arab traders, which you can choose to embrace by Adoption of Islam to build the magnificent Great Mosque of Djenne, managing your Unrest.

GREAT WEALTH
Passive: reduce all costs by 1. When you return 1 or more , gain 2 and draw a card.
Development cost: x5
CONTROLLING THE TRADE
Free play. Recall a to choose: gain 1 action OR trade. Exhaust: when you trade, exhaust this card to choose: gain 1 OR put a card from your discard pile into your history.
Development cost: x3
ADOPTION OF ISLAM
Free play. Choose up to 2 times: return a OR put a card from your hand or discard pile into your history. Find Pact with Bida (including from in play), and put it and this card into your history.
Development cost: x3
GREAT MOSQUE OF DJENNE
Cannot be played unless Adoption of Islam is in your history. Solstice: gain 1 per / you have in play. You MAY return a from your discard pile.
Development cost: x4